

BREAKDOWN



DATA ON THE DECOMPOSITION OF SOCIETY

• The National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse says 40 per cent of today's young people take a drink before age 11 — in contrast to 20 per cent in previous generations.

• The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism reports that 1.3 million Americans between the ages of 12 and 17 have what it calls "serious drinking problems."

COMMUTERS

REVOLT

kept only for emergencies. For the first time since the Washington Post's pressmen went on strike and sabotaged nine presses early this month (TIME, Oct.

With another school season about to open, teachers and psychologists are preparing to take a closer look at that minority of children who develop an abnormal hatred of school. Such



windows, fought furiously with riot police and stole enough tickets to permit thousands of commuters to ride free for years. Within a matter of hours, the revolt spread to the great industrial cen-

TEAMSTERS' WESTERN CONFERENCE HEADQUARTERS DAMAGED BY EXPLOSION



Texas players seek escape from beery fans

FIGHT IN A WELFARE HOTEL LOBBY

The divorce rate has nearly doubled since 1960, and in the past four years it has already increased as much as it did during the entire decade of the Sixties.

Other experts note the fact that young people, especially, are unwilling to stick with unrewarding relationships, and older folks are no longer deterred by the social stigma once attached to getting a divorce. With these restraints of morality gone, the rate is projected to climb even higher during the second half of this decade.

DUKE PROF. JAMES BORK AFTER GETTING HIT WITH A PIE

Breakdown

"What is happening is that the old ideas and assumptions which once made our great institutions legitimate, authoritative and confident are fast eroding. They are slipping away in the face of a changing reality and are being replaced by different ideas and different assumptions which are, as yet, ill-formed, contradictory and shocking."

Prof. George Cabot Lodge
Harvard School of Business

The landscape of capitalism is a global one, existing everywhere with only minor variations. But this universal reign of the paycheck and the price-tag is approaching a state of crisis, becoming noticeable to all but those whose idea of politics excludes everyday reality.

Naturally enough, this crisis of the spirit, this nearing collapse of daily routine is reaching its most acute forms thus far in America, capital's most advanced arena. Feelings of cynicism, powerlessness, and desperate boredom no longer allow easy distraction; we know that an upside-down world forces us to remain onlookers in our own lives, and that the social fact of this realization is fast sending the prevailing values to ashes. The magnitude of alienation is arriving at a critical point, threatening to swamp the foundations of our own pacification.

In 1974 the Hudson Institute published Overholt and Kahn's "Perceptions of the Quality of Life," which found that "polls show enormously widespread doubt among American citizens regarding America's most basic governmental and private institutions." From the same semi-governmental think-tank came Barry Smernoff's "Images of Future American Society," with its similar verdict as to "our worsening cultural malaise" and "spreading alienation." Also in '74 appeared a Max Lerner article in the prestigious *Foreign Affairs*, reporting a pervasive sense of "being at the end of the tether, a mordant feeling of disintegration and decay."

The roots of this sense of "disintegration and decay" were not hard to locate; their reflection was available by a glance at a newsstand's offerings. The June 24, 1974 *U.S. News and World Report* carried "Vandalism: a Billion Dollars a Year and Getting Worse," and their November 25 issue bemoaned the lowest Fall election participation in 30 years with "The Real Loser: Voter turnout." E. R. Ramey's "Boredom: The Most Prevalent American Disease" discussed the fairly obvious in the November *Harper's*. Another side of this malaise was provided in December by the *Los Angeles Times* with the disclosure that arson had more than tripled in the past ten years.

The January 18, 1975 *New Republic* offered further commentary on the preceding November's extremely low voter turnout in the aptly titled "Politics as Spectator Sport." The editors noted that growing numbers are convinced that voting doesn't affect their lives, and warned gravely that this attitude points clearly in the direction of "goodbye to domestic tranquility." National attention was directed at the New York Telephone Company in February and March, as if to highlight the recent arson statistics referred to above, when two dozen fires struck their facilities in less than three weeks. In mid-March, the nation's oldest and biggest private security agency, Pinkerton's, declared a very sizable increase in earnings over 1974. In fact, the firm's earnings increased 500% in the past 10 years due to mounting American employee theft, vandalism, and sabotage.

"Loneliness is the most insidious condition in modern society," concluded USC's Dr. John Milner in April, the same month that a Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency report gave graphic testimony to the fruits of this emptiness and alienation. The 18-month study found that violence in public schools has reached "a crisis level that seriously threatens the schools' educational mission," and that the annual cost of vandalism is equal to the "entire annual investment for textbooks," to quote the April 10, 1975 *New York Times*.

In May, the *California Poll* reported that only labor unions

and public schools ranked lower in public confidence than business, and that the levels of confidence expressed showed "a decline from the low levels found in a similar survey two years ago." A May Gallup Poll showed like results, with businessmen, union leaders, and political officeholders occupying the lowest rankings in a national survey of college students.

In June, a study group of the World Health Organization noted the growing incidence of suicide among children under 10 years of age. This remarkable news was independently disclosed during the same month by the director of the National Poison Center network, Dr. Richard Moriarty, who expressed shock at "the number of kids who are thinking about suicide at age 7 or 10." In April, Dr. Darold Treffert had said that "the number of teen-age suicides in the United States has tripled in the last decade, to an estimated 30 a day, with more than half the patients in the nation's psychiatric hospitals under age 21." Treffert, of Wisconsin's Mental Health Institute, blamed the hoax of the "American fairy tale," and observed that millions are plagued throughout their lives by "a gnawing emptiness or meaninglessness expressed not as a fear of what may happen to them, but rather as a fear that nothing will happen to them." A part of the teenage suicide phenomenon is a bizarre but increasingly prevalent psychosomatic disease, *anorexia nervosa*. Called the "golden girl disease," very popular, bright teenage girls fall victim to a total apathy in which they simply starve themselves to death. Less dramatic, but certainly somewhat along the same lines, is the June Gallup Poll finding that the proportion of those who drink is at the highest point ever recorded in the 35 years of Gallup Polls.

A Labor Department national survey released in June disclosed an unforeseen dimension to the trend toward the 4-day week. The trend toward the shorter workweek was largely begun in the early '70's as a response to the very high absenteeism rate, and it came as a shock to learn that those on 4-day schedules "were just as likely as 5-day workers to be

absent". The July 8 *Wall Street Journal* reported that auto workers were staying home from work in at least the same very high numbers as they did two years before, despite the massive recession lay-offs in auto.

The Burlington Northern Railroad's poll of thousands of employees (*Wall Street Journal*, July 15) proved to be another surprise to management. It found that workers with a favorable attitude toward the union also have a favorable attitude toward the boss, and that negative feelings about the two are also paired. And on July 22 it was announced that employer orders for lie detectors to be used on workers were up 25% in 1975, though more than a dozen states bar their use as a condition of employment. A further note for the month on social attitudes was Sylvia Porter's financial column for July 30. It reported on "the soaring student loan default rate," with default claim figures seen "rising in a perpendicular line" as pay-back obligations were ignored.

The evidence continues, from all sectors, with the July *Harvard Business Review*'s "On Executive Suicide," followed by "Why Executives' Children Drink" in the August *Dun's Review*. Several Summer magazine articles discussed D. T. Lunde's alarming Murder and Madness and its information on our "homicidal society." More interesting than a murder rate which has doubled in the past 20 years, is his finding that the murder rate goes up and the suicide rate declines now during economic slumps, a major reversal which is tied to rising expectation. A national poll done for the Peoples Bicentennial Commission by Hart Research Associates in August revealed that more than half of the American people believe that both political parties are dominated by big business and only 22% believe that the capitalist system has not yet reached its peak. The poll was widely reported, with headlines such as, "Poll Finds 'Startling' Loss of Faith in Capitalism," and "Public is Turning Against Capitalism."

Also in August, the wildcat strike of 80,000 miners in several states was an event of significance, especially for its anti-union militancy. It was directed at the union's collusion

with management and the United Mine Workers' Union was clearly the key to breaking the illegal strike. As miners skirmished with police, defied court orders, and attacked the UMW District 17 headquarters in Charlestown, West Virginia, the union came out very strongly and openly against its own members. An extremely harsh disciplinary program was established after the strike to defend the union and appease the coal operators. Over 1,000 miners' wildcats were reported in 1973, for example, and the new reform leadership of the UMW seems as powerless as the earlier corrupt leaders to contain the workers.

September saw what has become a commonplace - articles about kids versus the schools. Feature stories abounded, such as the September 3 *San Francisco Examiner* story on children often the very brightest, "who develop an abnormal hatred of school." Herbert Hendin's The Age of Sensation was widely reviewed in the fall, with its datum that the suicide rate of the young has risen over 250% in the past 20 years, and its prediction of increased frustration and rebellion by youth. On September 21, the National Association of Mental Health disclosed that depression is rapidly gaining on schizophrenia as the nation's number one mental health problem. Their survey maintained that 15% of Americans aged 18 to 74 suffer symptoms of serious depression. The September *Seventeen* ("Young America's Favorite Magazine") featured Lester David's "Breakdown I," a teenage case study which also publicized five emotional health danger signals, such as "undue and prolonged" anxiety and despair. An average amount of anxiety or despair is apparently seen by some as acceptable these days.

Ed and Jovita Addeo's Why Our Children Drink was published in October and brought to light remarkable figures on heavy and desperate drinking by kids. Their investigations found fifth graders coming to school drunk, almost half the students of one seemingly typical California high school drunk in school, almost 10,000 teenage alcoholics receiving treatment in Los Angeles, and similar facts. The "alarming

decline" in Scholastic Aptitude Test scores was also given much attention during the month, including an October 25 pledge by the College Entrance Examination Board to undertake a thorough investigation. Average scores for both the verbal and mathematical appts of the SAT tests have been declining since 1963, and the drop in 1975 scores from those of 1974 represented by far the sharpest drop yet. Also in October, Patrick Caddell of Cambridge Reports said his figures show that 68% of the public believes that "America's leaders have consistently lied to the American people" over the last ten years. Pollsters Louis Harris, Irving Crespi, and Peter Hart, also testifying before the congressional Joint Economic Committee, reported much the same kind of widespread cynicism regarding political parties and the economic system itself.

Dr. Ronald Jackson, Dean of Student Life at the University of Rochester, studied student attitudes in the Sixties and recently polled today's students. In November discussions of his findings, a good deal of nostalgia among academicians for the '60's students was revealed. President Kingman Brewster of Yale, for example, agreed sadly with Jackson that students showed great faith in the idea of education as the key to solving social problems in the '60's, in contrast to students of the '70's. The study indicated also that not only do students now have fewer illusions about college training, but they are also less easily polarized and manipulated, perhaps another source of nostalgia for college administrators.

In December, the Institute of Life Insurance issued a Trend Analysis report, outlining what insurance executives can expect during the next twenty years. "Many Americans are abandoning the work ethic," began its press release, and the report drew a good deal of publicity for its assertions that people increasingly want to be guaranteed all the amenities of life, are increasingly frustrated and estranged, and show a greatly increased potential for work slowdowns, sabotage and riots.

In early 1976, Peter Schrag and Diane Divosky's The Myth of the Hyperactive Child revealed that almost half the nation's

children are being drugged in the schools.

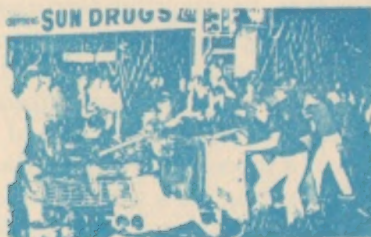
And on and on. I'm sure the reader can bring to mind much of the same - and without recourse to the printed page. From the multiplication of mass murders, to the acceleration of an almost frenzied tourism, to mounting terrorism, to the revolt against work, to the dying and decomposition of New York (our most 'advanced' urban space), to the virtual end of voting by those under forty, to a desensitized sexuality and growing isolation, to practically every line of poetry written today. A paragraph of a recent *San Francisco Chronicle* review by Thomas Albright begins, "In a world where all of us share the same basic futility. . ." And no one can take exception to the phrase; the fact is too obvious to try to deny.

A break-up of the deepest sort is nearing because more and more people refuse to tolerate merely surviving. Destruction, and even self-destruction, are preferred to the impossibility of living. *Fortune*, capital's leading monthly, designated April '75 its Special Bicentennial Issue, featuring Daniel Bell's "Revolution of Rising Entitlements" article. Bell declared that "unlimited wants" are threatening the system. An "equality of results" is being demanded, as human desires are being taken seriously in society. People are starting to want everything, and thus the last part of his offering, "Recognizing the Limits of Power," counsels our masters to make explicit the limits of capitalism. It's time to tell everyone that we can't expect to become happy!

But at the same time, those who serve the commodity are still trying to keep the world of things the master of the human world by cashing in on exactly the desires which have become so dangerous. It's "Mustang II, Boredom zero!," "Light up a Muriel and light up your life!," "Harley-Davidson - the freedom machine!," "Old Smuggler's Scotch - for those who refuse to compromise," ad nauseum. They can't help but know what everyone wants: freedom, authenticity, adventure; and so they must attempt to offer more and more - in terms of what can only be seen as less and less.

From Walter Kerr's The Decline of Pleasure (1962) to

Robert Nisbet's Twilight of Authority (late 1975), even random titles point up the process.



Pirate fans celebrating

What is our connection with this real movement? Why are the apparent options those of intervening with the insertion of theory or insular pleasure-seeking while awaiting the apocalyptic moment when the proletariat "adopts" theory/consciousness? Both positions are condemned to ideology and its casements, blindfolded to the most natural alternatives and outcomes. Why, in the most advanced revolutionary tendencies, does there remain a polarization of theory and subjectivity?

An antithesis of this dead-endism can be glimpsed by the data cited above - and, we intend, by our own active denial of limits and separations.

Written by John and Paula Zerzan.

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In Australia, They 'Bribe' Men to Work

Rioter in Detroit: Back from the brink

The FBI's annual report called "Crime in the United States," showed sharp increases in the number of teenagers arrested, particularly for crimes committed in the suburbs.

Nine out ten London boys have been involved in robbery before they leave school and one in five has committed a serious theft by the age of seven, according to a report published yesterday.



"The private security business is booming." That's the way Lipson begins his book, and he goes on to document the boom. "In 1960," he pointed out, "there were 4280 separate guard and investigative agencies doing business in the United States, nearly four times the number of such firms in 1964."

In addition to this proliferation of firms, the field has seen the growth of a handful of companies to sizes well beyond the wildest dreams of their founders.

there were dozens of fires and lootings,



(This is written in response to the theft of Scribbles by some of our authors and to the recent destruction of our distribution box at Lewis & Clark College.)

One week ago, 170 workers in the Gilmore Envelope Co. plant walked off the job to protest six remote control television cameras that spy on them as they work.

"They felt it was an extension of Big Brother and an invasion of their personal privacy," said Gary Dunmeyer, business representative for the Printing Specialties and Paper Product Unions.

Although he sympathizes with the workers' feelings, Dunmeyer said, he had to order them back to work because the walkout was in violation of the union's contract with Gilmore.

Goodyear's Davis. "As a fourth-generation Australian, I was always prepared to work and it makes me mad that you have to impose and force people to them to do some work once they get here."

"The union said it would be better to give money incentives instead of prizes for the campaign. We said we'd be glad to if we could just get the people to show up. But how can you give incentives if no one's around to collect them?"



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